

UNITED STATES ARMS CONTROL AND DISARMAMENT AGENCY

WASHINGTON

State Dept. review completed

OFFICE OF
THE DIRECTOR

March 3, 1982

MEMORANDUM FOR THE PRESIDENT

Memorandum of Director of ACDA Transmitting
ACDA Staff Paper on Policy Issues Involved
in United States Approaches to Arms Transfer,
Arms Control, Non-Proliferation, and Related
Matters in the Middle East

On 22 December 1981, you decided to have the NSC review the policy issues involved in our Middle East arms control programs, and asked for a document which could serve as the basis for future NSC deliberations on the subject. This Transmittal Memorandum and the attached Staff Paper constitute ACDA's response to your directive.

ACDA recommends that you reaffirm the major objectives of United States Middle Eastern policy since 1945 but direct a number of clarifications and changes in the methods used to achieve those objectives.

The essential conclusion of our analysis is the necessity for an integrated approach to all the policy

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XGDS, Review for declassification on Feb. 28, 2002

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problems we face in the Middle East -- an approach dominated by a fresh appraisal of our priorities, so that we should be able in particular cases to reconcile conflicts among the objectives of policy, and achieve a more coherent and therefore more effective strategy. During the last eight months, we have often allowed the pursuit of one proper goal of American policy to frustrate the pursuit of other even more important goals. The result has been unfortunate in arms control as in other aspects of our policy for the Middle East.

The goals of United States policy in the Middle East, as we understand them, are:

1. to prevent Soviet domination of the area, and indeed significantly to diminish the Soviet presence in the area;
2. to promote friendly and cooperative relations among the peoples and states of the region, and between them and the United States; in that connection, of course, the most important and explosive but by no means the only issue for our diplomacy is the task of persuading the Arab states of the region (other than Egypt) to comply with Security Council Resolutions 242 and 338, and make peace with Israel; quite

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apart from all the other reasons which have led the United States to support that policy since 1948, the Soviet Union has been able to exploit Arab resistance to making peace with Israel as a major weapon of its policy of expansion throughout the Middle East; and

3. to help in seeing to it that the other purposes and principles of the Charter of the United Nations, and particularly its prohibition against the international use of force save for purposes of self defense, are fulfilled in the Middle East as they they should be in other parts of the world.

1. Preventing Soviet Dominion in the Middle East.

Defeating the Soviet tactic of creeping hegemony in the Middle East is now the most urgent task of American foreign and security policy in the region. Unless our effort is successful, we face the likelihood of major geopolitical change -- change it may be immensely difficult to reverse. In this critical effort we have made no progress during the last year. On net we have probably fallen further behind.

The Soviet campaign in the Middle East must be seen in the larger setting of Soviet strategy. For many years, Soviet strategic doctrine has been based on the maxim

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that he who controls the Eurasian land mass controls world politics. Since 1945, the Soviet strategy has been to achieve dominion over Western Europe, in the conviction that if Western Europe falls, Japan, China, and many smaller countries would draw the necessary conclusions, leaving the United States isolated and impotent in a hostile world. The Soviet drive for the Middle East should be understood as a step in its campaign to outflank Western Europe and separate it from the United States, preferably without war.

Since the fall of the Shah, it has been clear that we shall have to establish a United States and Allied military presence throughout the Middle East, from Eastern Turkey and the Red Sea to Morocco. This is now a recognized part of our policy. Success in this effort would contribute immeasurably to stabilizing the region and diminishing the probability both of war and of further American retreat. It would also transform the political environment, making it more likely that we could persuade the Arab states to make peace with Israel.

This policy is being pursued, but not with the urgency the situation demands. We have not yet convinced either our friends or our adversaries that we are deter-

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mined to protect our national interests in the Middle East and are capable of doing so. None of our political objectives for the Middle East will be within our reach unless we move forward quickly to establish a strong and visible Western military presence throughout the area, backed by a public opinion which understands and accepts the moral and legal justification for our actions and is prepared for the possible use of force if necessary.

Since the time of President Truman, every President of the United States, with the full and repeated backing of the Congress, has declared that it is a vital national interest of the United States to prevent Soviet domination of the Middle East. The United States is committed by the Middle East Resolution of 1957, the Eisenhower Doctrine Resolution, as amended, to use armed forces as the President deems it necessary to protect the territorial integrity and political independence of all the states in the area against the aggressive policies of the Soviet Union. Congress recognized the Middle East Resolution to be a "specific statutory authorization" for the Presidential use of force requiring no further Congressional action under the War Powers Resolution. The guaranty of the Eisenhower Doctrine Resolution has been

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invoked several times in behalf of countries in the region, and American armed forces have been stationed there at intervals in order to deter the threat of armed attacks. The North Atlantic Council has also declared that Soviet hegemony in the Middle East would threaten the security of NATO.

2. Allied Solidarity in Stabilizing the Middle East.

In carrying out such a Middle Eastern policy, we should work not only with friendly or potentially friendly regional states but with some of our European allies, Japan, Australia and New Zealand, and perhaps certain other countries as well. The entire Western world has the same stake in preventing Soviet domination of the Middle East. We have had successful policies of diplomatic concert in the Middle East before -- notably in the early 1950s, before the Indo-China affair in 1954 and the Suez crisis of 1956, and again in the period 1966-1969. We should try again. Even if a discreet diplomatic effort to this end should fail, we should be no worse off than we are now. Differences of view between European and American attitudes towards Israel have been considered an obstacle to Allied cooperation on Middle Eastern problems. In my experience, these supposed differences have been more an excuse than a reality.

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3. A Fresh Start for the Peace Process

ACDA recommends a major effort -- and if possible, a concerted, large scale diplomatic effort -- to persuade the Arab states to carry out their obligations under Resolutions 242 and 338 and make peace with Israel.

Arab refusal to make peace with Israel is the heart of the Arab-Israeli component of our Middle Eastern problem. Americans find it difficult to believe that in their vast majorities the Arabs genuinely want to destroy Israel and create a single state in the territory of "Palestine," i.e., the territory of the British Palestine Mandate. But that is the case. No degree of Israeli or American "flexibility" can alter this position, which is one of principle and conviction. The Arabs will accept the verdict of history and make peace with Israel, as Egypt did, only when they perceive that they have no real alternative.

For parallel reasons, we must undertake a fresh campaign to secure the fulfillment of Resolutions 242 and 338. There is no real alternative for the United States. "Wait and see" would be an even more dangerous policy. No step short of peace between Israel and all its neighbors could deny the Soviet Union what has proved to be its most powerful weapon of imperial expansion in the Middle

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East, its support for the Arab dream of destroying Israel. The autonomy plan of the Camp David Agreements cannot accomplish that purpose. It is simply a transitional scheme designed to bring about the appearance of change during the period before Jordan is ready to make peace under Resolution 242. Since Resolution 242 does not require, contemplate, or indeed permit any change in Israel's legal status in the West Bank and the Gaza Strip until Jordan does make peace, it never was likely that a Camp David autonomy plan could change the political atmosphere appreciably; under Resolution 242 there can be no Israeli withdrawals or basic political changes until Jordan makes peace. And even under ideal conditions a Camp David autonomy plan could not produce peace between Israel and Jordan, Syria, Lebanon, Iraq, and Saudi Arabia.

At the moment, Israel is still the strongest military power in the area, and an indispensable ally of the United States in any combined effort to diminish or eliminate Soviet influence in the Middle East. That critically important factor is likely to change if we allow the present situation to persist, and Israel's military and political position to erode. Moreover, there are positive

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elements in the situation, which should make it possible for us to mobilize Western opinion, as we did in 1967. Mitterand's presence in France should help. And beneath the surface the Western governments still recognize both their inescapable responsibility for the Palestine Mandate and the existence of Israel, and the deep identification of Christendom with the Zionist experiment. This is a good time to try again.

Nothing could more vividly demonstrate the need for an integrated Middle Eastern policy, including a firm directive to push for the fulfillment of Resolutions 242 and 338, than our conduct of the day-to-day diplomacy of the Arab-Israeli conflict. On this critical issue, we have waffled ineffectively, taking inconsistent positions cut off from their roots in law and policy. On the Israeli raid against the Iraqi nuclear reactor last June, for example, your position, as stated in press conferences and in your statement on non-proliferation of July 19, 1981, put the issue in a sound perspective. But the position we took in the Security Council bore no relation to what you said. It repudiated the legal

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justification for our actions during the Cuban Missile Crisis and led to a dangerous attack on the IAEA a few months later.

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4. Arms Exports. Our military assistance programs throughout the area should be integrated with our effort to carry out the first three components of the strategy outlined here. This was the basis for the ACDA memorandum sent to the Secretary of State on August 18, 1981, supporting the AWACS sale to Saudia Arabia. (Attached)

On the basis of the assumptions about our Middle Eastern policy stated above, that memorandum defended the AWACS sale in the light of the criteria of the statute as a contribution to regional peace and stability. At the time I believed those assumptions were justified. While the issue is now more doubtful, it is still my hope that this is still the case.

While we try to achieve an effective Middle Eastern program, ACDA recommends that we use military assistance

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consciously and firmly in the interest of encouraging Jordan, Saudia Arabia, and other countries to cooperate with us in establishing stability in the area and making peace with Israel. Only then will our actions meet the test of being balanced and even-handed.

Both Saudi Arabia and Jordan are critical to the peace process.

Jordan is the key to the settlement of the Palestine problem. Jordan and Israel are the two Palestinian states which have emerged from the sequence of war, diplomacy, and Security Council decisions about Palestine since 1946. By making a peace which would settle the future of the West Bank and the Gaza Strip, Jordan and Israel can greatly diminish the burden of the Palestine problem in Arab politics and therefore in world politics. Moreover, Jordan is now in a good position to make peace. Egypt has taken the first step. Syria is in turmoil. Iraq is at war with Iran. And Egypt and Saudi Arabia should fully support a Jordanian bid for peace, if they can be convinced we are going to win the Cold War. Unless we can establish that conviction, however, we shall fail in all our efforts.

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5. Non-Proliferation Policy. The President's statement of July 19, 1981, linked the pursuit of non-proliferation to the quest for general and regional stability. It is apparent that nations which feel they are threatened by extinction cannot be expected to renounce the possibility of obtaining nuclear weapons, however illusory the idea may be as a defensive measure. Moreover, some states which harbor aggressive impulses are potential proliferators. There are both kinds of proliferation risks in the Middle East.

With regard to the Middle East, the United States has supported the initiative for a Nuclear Weapon Free Zone (NWFZ) sponsored originally by Iran and now being pressed by Egypt. ACDA has taken the lead in urging an active United States diplomatic effort in behalf of the Middle East NWFZ project, both as a contribution to regional stability and as a catalyst for persuading the Arab states other than Egypt to make peace with Israel. Exploratory talks on the subject have been held with Great Britain, France, Germany, Australia, Canada, and a number of other countries -- all of whom were positive about the venture -- and with Egypt, Israel, and (at its request) Iraq.

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The United States was active in supporting the Egyptian effort to move the Middle East NWFZ proposal forward at the last General Assembly. ACDA's view that unless the Middle East NWFZ project is linked to the peace process it is bound to be stillborn was the issue which precipitated your decision to order the present review of policy.

The linkage between arms sales and non-proliferation efforts on the one hand and Arab cooperation in security arrangements and the peace process on the other cannot of course be mechanical or heavy-handed. But the articulation of a clear policy objective often has a profound and pervasive influence on behavior. The application of the principle of linkage will require a high degree of sensitivity to conditions in each of the states concerned. What is needed now, in our judgment, is that you instruct us to apply the principle of linkage, so that arms control policy in the broadest sense can contribute additional momentum to the progress of our policy towards the goals identified here -- preventing Soviet domination of the region; promoting peace throughout the area, and especially between Israel and

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its neighbors; and building Allied solidarity in the Middle East as a permanent and constructive feature of our diplomacy for the region.

Eugene V. Rostow

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Attachment:

August 18, 1981 Memorandum
to the Secretary of State

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